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Message Text

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60
ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-11 INR-10

IO-13 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 M-03 NEA-10 PRS-01 RSC-01

USSS-00 SY-10 FAA-00 PM-07 PA-03 USIA-12 OPIC-12

AID-20 RSR-01 /145 W
---------- 003002
R 052035 Z JUL 73
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2695

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E. O. 11652: N/ A
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, AR
SUBJECT: ARGENTINE AIRLINER HIJACKED TO CUBA

1. SUMMARY. AN AEROLINEAS ARGENTINAS BOEING 737 WAS HIJACKED JULY 4 BY AT LEAST THREE ERP TERRORISTS AND FORCED TO FLY VIA CHILE AND PERU TO HAVANA, CUBA. PURPOSE OF HIJACKING APPEARS TO BE FOR TERRORISTS TO FLEE COUNTRY, PERHAPS INDICATING PRESSURES BEING PUT ON THEM BY SECURITY FORCES. NEW CUBAN- ARGENTINE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONSHIP MAY THUS RECEIVE ITS FIRST REAL STRAIN. END SUMMARY

2. SHORTLY AFTER MIDDAY ON JULY 4 AN AEROLINEAS FLIGHT BOUND FROM BUENOS AIRES TO JUJUY WAS HIJACKED BY AT LEAST THREE ERP TERRORISTS, MEMBERS OF THE " COMANDO LEONARDO PEDRO BOTET." THE PLANE LANDED FIRST IN MENDOZA AND THEN IN SANTIAGO WHERE 49 OF THE PLANE' S PASSENGERS GOT OFF TO RETURN TO ARGENTINA. THE PLAN THEN CONTINUED ON TO LIMA WITH 22 PASSENGERS AND 6 CREW MEMBERS, THE ULTIMATE DESTINATION BEING HAVANA, CUBA. ALTHOUGH IT WAS ORIGINALLY SURMISED THAT THE TERRORISTS MIGHT TRY TO EXTORT MONEY FROM AEROLINEAS, IT APPEARS NOW THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE HIJACKING IS SIMPLY FOR THE TERRORISTS TO FLEE ARGENTINA.

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3. THE NEWS WAS BROKEN TO PRESIDENT CAMPORA AS HE WAS LUNCHING AT THE AIR FORCE BUILDING WITH AIR FORCE CINC PAUTARIO. THE SITUATION WAS DISCUSSED WITH AIR FORCE OFFICERS, AEROLINEAS OFFICIALS, MININT RIGHI, AND LATER WITH PERON DURING A CABINET MEETING AT THE LATTER' S HOUSE IN VICENTE LOPEZ. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ADOPTED THE POSITION OF NOT DEALING WITH THE TERRORISTS, BUT OF NOT FORCIBLY IMPEDING THE FLIGHT, EITHER.

4. COMMENT. THE ATTITUDE OF CUBAN OFFICIALS IS NOT YET KNOWN, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED CUBAN- ARGENTINE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONSHIP MAY BE TESTED BY THE MANNER IN WHICH THIS INCIDENT IS HANDLED. ALTHOUGH IT IS POSSIBLE THE TERRORISTS ARE TRYING TO DEFY THE GOVERNMENT IN A DRAMATIC MANNER, IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THEIR PRIMARY MOTIVATION IS SIMPLY TO ESCAPE THE COUNTRY, THUS INDICATING PERHAPS THAT THE GOVERNMENT' S SECURITY FORCES ARE PUTTING EFFECTIVE PRESSSURE ON TERRORIST GROUPS.
LODGE

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a
*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 05 JUL 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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